

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 23, 2007**

Members Present: Ennis, Morris, Carroll, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Spitzfaden, Thompson, Wasson and Webb

Members Excused: Endres, Newstadt and Timberman

Staff Present: Davila, Reid, Quinlan and Patton

Guests: Michael Rybicki (Representing the VA Medical facility), Al Carter (SOS), Bill McMullen (AF Sergeants Association), Steve Flaherty (DOL), Burton Barr (NARFE), David Ramsey and Cullen Beaudin (Elks Lodge 2540)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Ennis opened the meeting by reporting that during a recent meeting with the Secretary of State, she made it clear that issues relating to the complaint box for the Veterans Home were not a concern for the Commission. The Commission should take a proactive approach on matters concerning the Veterans Home and it is up to the Administrator to handle related issues.

Mr. Rybicki reported on the status of the VA Community Out-Based Clinic (CBOC) in lower Delaware. He stated that a location had been secured for the Georgetown CBOC and they hope to have it up and running by early spring. They have some potential sites for the Dover CBOC and hope to have a lease or contract signed very soon. He will contact Mr. Davila when that happens.

Mr. McMullen reported that they had Legislative Awareness week at Dover Air Force Base and talked to people about how to get involved in legislation and provided voter registration.

Mr. Flaherty introduced himself and provided a brief synopsis of his job responsibilities.

Mr. Ramsey reported that they are working with several groups in providing entertainment for the Veterans Home.

Mr. Reid reported on the current status of the Veterans Home and provided visual aids with his presentation. He briefed the Commission on current events being conducted at the Home. He also reported on current staffing and employment opportunities, as well as licensure and certification. The Home received a \$20,000 donation from the American Legion, Post 3 in Milford. He announced that the Veterans Home was the recipient of two construction awards; The Office of Budget and Management Award for Constructional Work for 2007 and The Delaware Chapter of American Builders and Contractors Association Award for Construction Greater than \$10M for 2007. The Home will now compete regionally for that same distinction. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Carroll raised an issue in reference to the Veterans Home Steering Committee Meeting minutes. It was decided that the issue would be looked into and discussed at the next Steering Committee Meeting.

Chairman Ennis reiterated that all issues related to the Veterans Home are non-issues for the Commission. It is not necessary for issues to be approved by the Commission and they should be left to the Home Administrator. Certainly, the Commission should be briefed on information pertaining to the Veterans Home. Discussion followed.

**MOTION BY HARDEN TO ACCEPT SEPTEMBER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY THOMPSON, MOTION CARRIED.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Davila reported that interviews were conducted for the A&E firm for the Southern Cemetery. They are waiting on documentation from the contractor for changes and enhancements to the Northern Cemetery. He provided a brief outline of the anticipated upgrades and changes for the Cemeteries.

**COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS**

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that he will be the AMVETS Master of Ceremonies at this year's Veterans Day Ceremony at the Delaware Memorial Bridge.

**FINANCE AND LOGISTICS**

No report.

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Commissioner Carroll reported that the Health and Human Services Committee met on October 11, 2007, and reviewed a number of policies and procedures.

**LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

No report.

**PERSONNEL**

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that interviews were conducted for the Conservation Technician II for the Northern Cemetery and the position was filled. There is currently one other position vacant at the Northern Cemetery.

**MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS**

No report.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

No report.

## **BY-LAWS**

No report.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

Lank (MOWW) – Reported that BG Gebelein provided a briefing at the last MOWW meeting and was an excellent speaker.

Carroll (MOPH) – Reported that the MOPH has a drive going on to bring in new members. They are offering a lifetime membership for only \$50. He announced that a young Navy Seaman received the Medal of Honor and he is the son of their National MOPH Judge Advocate.

Lardizzone (DAV) – He attended a joint DAV/MOPH breakfast in Atlantic City, NJ. BG Tucker, who is in charge of the Walter Reed Medical Center, was the speaker. The General answered some tough questions and provided his business cards to encourage attendees to contact his office directly if they come across a soldier who is having problems.

Thompson (MCL) – He announced that the “Toys for Tots” program has begun. The Marine Corps Reserve assisted by the Marine Corps League Detachment in New Castle County, and the Marine Corps League Detachments in Kent & Sussex Counties have started putting out barrels and gearing up for their campaign to collect toys that will be distributed in late December.

Harden (WAVES) – Reported that her organization is working on raising money to secure their bronze plaque for the Veterans Home. She reminded everyone of the Women Veterans Symposium that will be held in Dover in April 2008.

Kitson (VFW) – He announced that the VFW Red, White & Blue Gala will be held on October 27, 2007, at the Sheraton in Dover. He informed everyone that he is growing his beard and hair long for a raffle to raise money. VFW Military Order of the Cooties Tomb Trek will be held November 2-4, 2007, in Washington, DC. The Eastern State Conference will be held November 18-20, 2007, in Albany, NY.

Morris (American Legion) – Informed everyone that the American Legion will be teaming up with Homeland Security to be a forefront organization in providing training for local folks to assist the folks who get paid for the job.

Ennis (KWVA) – Reported that they had their annual picnic in Milford and they had a nice turn-out. In December, they will have their quarterly Executive meeting and their annual holiday party. He reported that he attended the ceremony in Dewey Beach for the towers.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Carter requested that the Commission take a vote for Mr. Reid to explore the possibility of opening up the second dementia wing. This action will require him to file an application with long-term care for approval. Discussion followed.

**MOTION BY MORRIS FOR THE COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND THE VETERANS HOME ADMINISTRATOR TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION REQUIRED TO ACTIVATE A SECOND DEMENTIA WING, SECONDED BY LARDIZZONE, MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairman Ennis raised the issue that the Commission members are unsure of their responsibilities concerning the Veterans Home and would like some clarification from the Secretary of State. He asked Mr. Carter if he could assist in obtaining the clarification requested. Discussion followed.

Vice-Chairman Morris questioned Mr. Reid about the Veterans Home's policy of bringing gifts to the veterans. Mr. Reid clarified that as long as it is a personal gift for a veteran and the contents have been cleared; he encourages that exchange. They do not want people dropping off boxes of unapproved stuff. Mr. Reid stated that if anyone wants to have a Christmas party or event with the veterans at the Home; he encourages them to get with the Activities Director for scheduling.

Chairman Ennis presented a plaque to Vice-Chairman Morris for his dedication and service as Chairman.

Commissioner Webb resigned from the Commission. Chairman Ennis thanked him for his valuable service.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:      NOVEMBER 27, 2007 (10:00 AM)**

**LOCATION:                                   Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100  
Dover, DE**

**ADJOURNED**